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Harrison County Adult Detention Center
Technical Assistance Report

2007 MAR 6 PM 1 1

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT "15"

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The Request for Technical Assistance

In the later part of 2006, Sheriff George H. Payne Jr. and Warden Cabana of the Harrison County Sheriff's Department submitted a request for technical assistance to the National Institute of Corrections- Jail Center in Longmont, Colorado. The request asked for a review of the jail's booking, intake and release processes.

Specifically, the request for technical assistance was to address the following areas:

: To meet with key officials to discuss the technical assistance event and tour the booking, intake and release areas of the jail,
: To access the physical plant in terms of life safety, conditions of confinement, overall sanitation, security, and inmate supervision issues within the booking, intake and release areas,
: To observe booking, intake and release functions on each shift,
: To interview appropriate staff,
: To assess the adequacy of policies, procedures and post orders,
: To assess operations in terms of security, safety, use of technology, staff activities and training,
: To identify areas of vulnerability in the current booking, intake and release processes,
: To develop flowcharts for the booking, intake and release functions that intersects with local court functions,
: To meet again with key officials when the assessment is completed.

There have been documented incidents of several assaults on inmates by staff that have resulted in injuries to the inmates and one inmate death. All of the assaults have occurred either in the booking area, or were the result of actions taken by the booking staff in nearby areas of the facility. The United States Department of Justice is currently investigating these incidents and has made several arrests of staff. Recently, additional staff has received letters of investigation by the Department of Justice as the inquiry expands. Some staff members have already pled guilty to charges related to assaults on inmates. The NIC was asked to review existing practices and make recommendations based on the findings of the technical assistance visit.

The booking/intake/release processes were found to be disorganized, lacking in efficient and effective processing of legal documents, and significantly hampered by a Jail Management Computer system that is not only slow, but it does not meld information from the previous database. The fingerprint identification system used for release purposes is slow and often stops functioning. The process of booking and release should be thoroughly evaluated to ensure that the most productive practices are being utilized. Existing software/hardware systems should be evaluated as to their level of efficiency and productivity.

Detention staff does not uniformly receive pre-service training and annual in-service programs are not being regularly provided. The majority of training is currently on-the-job. The lack of training can be a contributory factor toward booking/release inefficiency and the lack of sufficient security measures in the booking area.

Detention staff does not adequately search all incoming inmates, nor are any inmates entered into the National Fingerprint Data Base utilizing the Live Scan System. These are major security flaws that should be immediately remedied. In at least one observed behavior, transported inmates were brought into booking and taken directly to a housing unit without being searched. The use of a metal detector wand was observed only on the third day of the visit. Sharp instruments on the counter are accessible to inmates.

Data entry errors were found throughout the intake process. These errors resulted in inmates being released yet their files remained active, the wrong arresting agency placed in the data log, and files did not always reflect the correct location of an inmate. The processing of files lacks effective checks and balances system that can uncover and/or prevent errors and inappropriate releases.

The morale of the staff is extremely low. Staff claimed they are overworked (typical shift is 14 hours with overtime) and they are not afforded breaks or time away for meals. Overtime is a common practice, with some field deputies working in booking 12+ hour shifts on their days off. This practice should be carefully evaluated as it presents a significant liability to the

County in the event a Deputy is involved in an incident that could be attributed to fatigue. According to Dr. Cabana, the 12 hour shift schedule was implemented as a short term measure after loss of so many staff members; however, this schedule remains in effect and there are no indications that it will terminate in the near future. During the period that this consultant was on site, Dr. Cabana stated that there were approximately 57 staff vacancies (Attachment 2). There are an insufficient number of officers to ensure that the facility is being operated in a safe and secure manner. Due to the high workload and short staffing, staff often takes "short cuts", which usually results in errors. Staff in the booking area stated they were tired from the long hours and this contributes to errors in the booking/release process.

The booking/release unit appears to be in a continual state of crisis. Due to insufficient staff, slow computers and a dysfunctional intake/release process, staff appeared to be in a crisis mode for the entire shift. There appears to be a lack of organizational continuity and an orderly flow of documents.

The booking area should never be left unattended, on one occasion during this technical assistance visit; this consultant was the only non-prisoner in the booking unit.

The inmate wrist band identification system, which is checked at the time of release, is not being enforced. 75% of the inmates who were being released did not have on their wrist bands. Wrist band usage was instituted as one measure to identify inmates.

The jails telephone system should be improved to provide a menu system so that outside and non intake related calls are not received in the intake area.

The practice of allowing the intake area to be viewed on the internet is a questionable practice. The best reflection of sound governmental policy is effective, efficient and ethical practices accomplished with highly trained personnel who are properly supervised in a work environment that encourages excellence.

Due to inadequate staffing levels, poorly trained staff, limited supervision, crowded conditions, failure to follow established policy and procedures, inadequate classification options and an intake/release process that is inefficient and ineffective, the Harrison County Adult Detention Center is

neither safe nor is it secure. Significant and immediate steps must be taken to improve the overall professionalism of the jail, improve staff morale, and ensure that staff, the inmates and the public are being served utilizing the best available practices of sound detention center management.

It is recommended that Jail Officials ensure that the following conditions are not present in the booking/release unit:

– New staff does not uniformly receive pre-service training. Existing pre- and in- training efforts should be expanded as possible.

– Staff should be held accountable for their actions that violate department rules and regulations, as well as federal, state and local laws. Retaining personnel who are negligent in their duties and/or not holding them fully accountable for their actions, does not promote professionalism and ethical management practices. According to staff and Dr. Cabana, there has been a pattern of allowing personnel to resign in lieu of disciplinary action being taken.

– Current and past supervisory levels are insufficient to ensure that staff is routinely and properly supervised by personnel who are qualified and have received training to be supervisors. Although supervisory levels are currently being increased, consideration should be given to ensuring that span of control standards are being followed.

Document Review Process –

In order to prepare for this technical assistance visit, this consultant contacted Dr. Cabana and requested that the following information be submitted for review:

Booking Policies, Procedures and Post Orders;
Staffing pattern;
Population data;
Booking and release data;
Copies of Intake/Screening forms;
Property inventory form;
Medical screening form;
Pertinent directive memos regarding booking;
Jail Blueprint;